

**Grand Bargain in 2020:**  
**Annual Self-Report – Narrative Summary**

**Name of Institution: European Commission – DG ECHO**

**Point of Contact (please provide a name, title and email to enable the consultants to contact you for an interview):**

[Adela.Kabrtova@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Adela.Kabrtova@ec.europa.eu)

[Gerard.Van-Driessche@ec.europa.eu](mailto:Gerard.Van-Driessche@ec.europa.eu)

**Date of Submission:**

(NB. Please limit your answer to no more than **5 pages in total** – anything over this word limit will not be considered by ODI in their analysis. Please respond to all of the questions below.)

### **Grand Bargain in 2020**

**Question 1: Reflecting on the information you have provided in the Excel spreadsheet, please highlight the 2 or 3 key outcomes or results relating to the Grand Bargain that your institution achieved in 2020?**

The European Commission (DG ECHO, Commission) continued to introduce, test and institutionalise new methods of working originating in the context of the Grand Bargain. **Programmatic Partnerships** and contributions to **Country-Based Pooled Funds** were added to Commission's toolbox in 2020's pilot studies.

In 2020, four **Programmatic Partnerships** were concluded with NGO partners, and it was also decided to expand the piloting by launching a new phase focusing on Programmatic Partnerships with International Organisations, including United Nations entities. This process will unfold in the course of 2021.

DG ECHO contributed to two **Country-Based Pooled Funds** (CBPF) for South Sudan and for Ukraine in 2020.

Programmatic partnerships and support to CBPFs are important in terms of support to **localisation**, and the EU follows closely the lessons learned and impact of these initiatives on the different elements of the Grand Bargain, in particular localisation.

Supporting pool funds managed by OCHA and UN Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTFO) of the UNDP is a coherent way to back the progress achieved in needs assessment, as needs assessment is a prerequisite for more flexible and less earmarked funding.

The use of **cash** has continued to progress and now holds a recognised role in aid delivery, reaching the 35% target and contributing to multi-annual programming. In addition, cash as aid modality offers an excellent way towards a **reinforced nexus approach**, by linking up with development supported (shock responsive) social safety nets. Cash also offers opportunities to support **participation** by providing more decision-making powers to affected populations. Cash finally also offers an opportunity to increase **efficiency** of the system by facilitating a **reduction of the management costs**. By improving the technical and theoretical understanding of how cash-based programming can best be applied in the different conditions met in the field, the use of cash-based programming allows for improved design of the actions, programming and delivery of aid.

In 2020, the Commission also decided to introduce elements of the **"8+3" format**. Namely, DG ECHO will enable partners to extract from the "Single Form" a report that is "8+3" coherent. In addition, the 2021 Programmatic Partnerships will offer

the opportunity to test the “8+3” format with interested partners on a pilot basis, allowing to test the format especially in terms of our own reporting obligations towards the EU oversight institutions and standards.

Finally, the Commission welcomes the progress in terms of **needs assessment** and the IASC approved integration of elements of the JIAF in the 2021 HPC.

**Question 2: How has your institution contributed to the advancement of gender equality and women’s empowerment<sup>1</sup> in humanitarian settings through its implementation of the Grand Bargain? What results/outcomes have been achieved in this regard? (please outline specific initiatives or changes in practice and their outcomes/results).** Please refer to the Guidelines for definitions of Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment, which are included in this self-report template package.

Since 2013 and the adoption of the policy "Gender – Different Needs, Adapted Assistance", DG ECHO reinforced gender mainstreaming, targeted actions and capacity building. Since 2014 a humanitarian **Gender-Age Marker** has been used as quality and accountability tool to measure the extent to which EU-funded humanitarian actions integrate gender and age considerations.

At the end of 2019, DG ECHO launched an e-learning on its Gender-Age Marker, to further build capacity on gender and age mainstreaming and the application of the Marker for its staff and partners. In June 2020, the EU published its second assessment report on its Gender-Age Marker, showcasing that for projects starting in 2016 and 2017, 89% of all EU humanitarian aid integrated gender and age considerations 'strongly' or 'to a certain extent'.

During 2019 and 2020, estimates show that the EU allocated approximately **EUR 56 million in humanitarian aid to prevent and respond to gender-based violence** under its protection and health programming. Furthermore, during 2019 and 2020, it is estimated that the EU allocated approximately **€45m to reproductive health** from its humanitarian health programming.

In 2020, DG ECHO continued to be an active member of the global initiative **Call to Action on Protection from Gender-Based Violence in Emergencies** (having previously led the initiative between June 2017 and December 2018). This global initiative brings together almost 90 partners comprising of governments and donors, international organisations and non-governmental organisations. DG ECHO contributed to the 2020 annual reporting exercise, and its 2019 progress report is published on the Call to Action website. In September 2020, a new Call to Action Road Map covering the period 2021-2025 was launched officially at the United Nations General Assembly meeting, in an event hosted by global lead 2010-2020 Canada, and attended by EU Commissioner Lenarčič.

In the framework of the implementation of the European Union Gender Action Plan II (2016-2020), progress has been made towards the aim of transforming the

---

<sup>1</sup> Refer to the IASC definitions of gender equality and women empowerment, available [here](#).

lives of girls and women through ensuring their physical and psychological integrity, promoting their economic and social rights and strengthening girls' and women's voice and participation. A **new Gender Action Plan for the EU external dimension for 2021-2025 was adopted in November 2020**. The new Gender Action Plan includes a number of humanitarian priorities, including on GBV, sexual and reproductive health and the Gender-Age Marker.

**Question 3: How has the humanitarian-development nexus been strategically mainstreamed in your institutional implementation of the Grand Bargain commitments?** Please explain how your institution has linked commitments 10.1 - 10.5 with other commitments from other work streams.

The nexus has been strategically mainstreamed in the Cash workstream. This has meant an active participation from DG ECHO in the subworkstream on the linkages between cash and social protection. Internally, cash has been instrumental to build the foundation of the nexus by generating strategic discussions under the safety net umbrella at country level.

Interesting pilot experiences have taken place to showcase shock responsive safety nets and to inform nationwide programming (such as in Somalia). DG ECHO has been promoting learning on coordination mechanisms with government and other agencies to further develop the linkages between cash and social protection.

In the context of the Covid-19 crisis, DG ECHO has recommended to its partners to scale-up the use of humanitarian cash transfers even further, for preparedness and response activities and in linkages with social protection.

Needs assessment, via the development of the JIAF, also reinforces the consideration for a “nexus-oriented” analysis.

### **Grand Bargain 2016-2020: Overall achievements and remaining gaps**

**Question 4: What are the 2-3 key achievements/areas of most progress by your institution since 2016?** Please report on your institutional progress for the period 2016-2020, **even** if your institution did not become a signatory until after 2016.

In the five years of the Grand Bargain, there have been a variety of significant changes in the way the European Commission works in the area of humanitarian aid. **Cash** became our most prominent single aid delivery modality.

The introduction of **Programmatic Partnerships** and contribution on a pilot basis to **Country-Based Pooled Funds** reinforced a more strategic approach to our partnerships, contributing to other elements of the Grand Bargain like localisation and quality funding. Even if DG ECHO cannot fund local actors directly, it has sought other means to contribute to this commitment. Working via one intermediary (where we fund international or EU-based partners who cascade the funds to local partners) does also provide opportunities to support localisation

with appropriate design of the action.<sup>2</sup> Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is another example how DG ECHO provides support to local responders.

Nevertheless, the main evolution is the realisation that **we need system-wide reforms** to address the ever-increasing funding gap despite constant increase in donor funding. The EU is ready to continue its path towards the Grand Bargain commitments, expecting that this can further provide opportunities for increased efficiency and effectiveness and improved design and delivery. We need to imprint such realisation – that the credibility of the humanitarian ecosystem depends on its capacity to reform, and that it needs to convince budgetary authorities and taxpayers of its continued validity and appropriate “design”.

**Question 5: What, in your institutional view, have been the main achievements of the Grand Bargain signatories, as a collective, since 2016?** Please indicate specific commitments, thematic or cross-cutting issues or workstreams where you think most progress has been made collectively by signatories.

The Grand Bargain has achieved **major progress in many areas**. Its unique framework serves as a good modality to pursue further the transformative objectives of the humanitarian system. The COVID-19 pandemic has further confirmed the validity of the Grand Bargain objectives.

The Grand Bargain facilitated the use of **cash** as aid modality, as well as it has enabled the introduction of **people-centered needs assessments**. Furthermore, it has put **localisation** and **participation** high on the humanitarian agenda and **promoted the use of multi-annual and less earmarked funding**.

The Grand Bargain was an important element in **driving reforms** within our organisation, as mentioned in Q4.

**Question 6: What has the Grand Bargain not been able to achieve in its five year tenure? What outstanding obstacles, gaps, areas of weakness still remain after five years, in terms of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action?** Please indicate specific commitments,

---

<sup>2</sup> Since 2018, the European Commission has funded the Local Initiative Fund in Turkey (LIFT), a multi-year programme, implemented by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) which is supporting community-based initiatives specifically targeting people with vulnerabilities and important protection needs. With EUR 12,250,000 disbursed for the first pilot in 2018 and EUR 4,000,000 in 2020 for the second phase, DG ECHO support to this programme has now reached EUR 16,250,000 Euro. The community-based initiatives supported by LIFT are implemented across different sectors in 14 of Turkey’s provinces. They play a critical role in bridging gaps in the provision of social and protection services. They also provide marginalised refugees with a safe space and access to a number of social and protection services. In addition, LIFT provides technical and financial support to NGOs running local community centres in order to strengthen their outreach to vulnerable and at-risk populations and tailor-made capacity development to enhance community-based organisations (CBO’s) and local NGOs capacities to run the projects in a high-quality manner. At least 56,000 individuals and around 30 implementing organisations are estimated to have benefitted from the intervention.

thematic or cross-cutting issues or work streams where you think there remain key gaps or obstacles.

### **Risk and the Grand Bargain**

**Question 7a: How has risk (financial, operational, reputational, etc) affected your institution's implementation of the core commitments since you became a signatory to the Grand Bargain?**

There are many dimensions to risk, so it is necessary to focus on the risks that are perceived as the most important. **Reputational risk** in the humanitarian sector has been affected by deplorable events related to sexual abuse and violence, and it has been necessary to intervene and introduce safeguarding mechanisms. Other risks include all aspects of **counter-terrorism/sanctions and de-risking**, which can seriously affect humanitarian action. Furthermore, addressing **fiduciary risks** in a context where humanitarian aid is ever increasing and reaching record amounts of donor/taxpayers generosity implies adopting risk assessment and control mechanisms that will imply a sufficient supervision of the intermediaries delivering aid.

**Question 7b: How has your institution sought to mitigate or address these risks to enable implementation of the core commitments?**

The European Commission applies a **zero tolerance policy regarding sexual harassment, exploitation and abuse**, and any other misconduct from its staff members and those of partner organisations receiving EU funds. It has opened channels of communication to report any abuse, and requested actions plans from its partners.

With regards to **counter-terrorism and sanctions**, DG ECHO has been advocating for humanitarian exceptions in such measures, as well as ensuring support to its partners through guidance, information sharing and other means, such as facilitating banking roundtables. Regarding **fiduciary risks**, the EU is constantly assessing its control mechanisms in light of the findings reported through its control mechanisms.